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AUTHOR Campbell, Ronald
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ABSTRACT

Although Monroe County Community College (MCCC) has been concerned about students with academic deficiencies since its founding in 1964, attempts to address this problem have been unsuccessful. Remedial courses, offered between 1965 and 1969, were discontinued due to lack of enrollment, and diagnostic testing of students for counseling and class placement were discontinued in light of concerns that the increasingly older student population was reluctant to take such tests. Other concerns included the role of grade inflation in masking the need for remedial education; questions about the validity of granting college credit for below college-level work; and the increasing costs of providing remedial/developmental courses. In 1981, in light of improved college finances and staff recommendations for the establishment of a Developmental and Remedial Center, MCCC's president conducted a survey of 903 community colleges investigating various dimensions of developmental learning at the community college level. Survey results, based on a 70.76% response rate, included the following: (1) 98% of the institutions offered remedial or developmental courses; (2) 81% awarded credit for remedial course work, with 48% awarding regular college credit; and (3) 38% of the respondents felt remedial courses should be offered for credit, but not apply to transfer; while 16% felt no credit should be awarded for remedial work. The study report discusses the implications of the findings for MCCC and includes the survey instrument and results. (KL)

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DEVELOPMENTAL AND REMEDIAL EDUCATION: A SURVEY OF AACJC MEMBERS 1981

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JC 820 441

by Ronald Campbell

October 1, 1982

In Michigan, under Public Act 331, 1966, the Community College Act, laws and statutes pertaining to junior and community colleges were recodified to provide a more effective means of locating legislation governing community colleges.

Chapter II, Section 105 defines community college programs, giving considerable latitude to the governing board of trustees concerning the types of services that they may provide to their constituency:

> "389.105 Community college programs; definitions.
>
> "Sec. 105. (1) A community college means an educational institution providing, primarily for all persons above the twelfth grade age level and primarily for those within commuting distance, collegiate and noncollegiate level education including area vocational-technical education programs which may result in the granting of diplomas and certificates including those known as associate degrees but not including baccalaureate or higher degrees.
>
> "(2) An area vocatonal-education program means a program of organized systematic instruction designed to prepare the following individuals for useful employment in recognized occupations:
>
> (a) Persons who have completed or left high school and who are available for full-time study in preparation for entering the labor market.
>
> (b) Persons who have already entered the labor market and who need training to achieve stability or advancement in employment.
>
> (c) Persons enrolled in high school.
>
> "(3) When programs or courses are provided for persons enrolled in high school, the provision of the programs or courses shall be requested for each of the individuals by the superintendent or his designated representative of the school district in which the person is enrolled.
>
> "(4) The word 'area', in the phrase 'area vocational-technical education program', refers to the geographical territory of the district, and whatever territory without

the district as is designated as the service area of the district by the state board of education. A community college is eligible to receive such state aid and assistance as may be appropriated by the legislature for the aid and support of junior colleges or community colleges."

When Monroe County Community College was established in 1964, the trustees planned a comprehensive community college to service the post-secondary educational needs of the county. They were not being serviced by the local K-12's and Intermediate School District.

The college catalogue states the objectives of the instructional programs:

"The College was organized to meet the educational needs of the community beyond those provided for in the normal public school systems through the twelfth grade by:

1. Offering the freshman and sophomore years of work in the liberal arts and pre-professional fields for those students who wish to transfer to higher educational institutions.

2. Offering one- and two-year career programs in business and technical areas for those students who expect to terminate their formal education by preparing for employment at the semi-professional level.

3. Offering programs of general education for the intellectual, cultural and personal development of students wishing to continue beyond senior high school.

4. Cooperating with other school systems, civic groups, educational institutions and organizations outside the community, educational foundations, and with private individuals and corporations in those endeavors likely to result in educational advantage to the citizens of the Community College District.

5. Offering educational services to the organiizations and individuals of the community, including speakers, resource personnel or material, organization of special institutes or programs, reading lists, educational counseling and testing, etc., as requested.

6. Providing comprehensive professional counseling and testing service to assist the student in the selection and pursuit of an academic program to prepare for an occupational career compatible with his interests, aptitudes and values."

The catalogue also lists eligibility requirements for entrance to the programs:

> "All applicants who are high school graduates or who have successfully completed the General Education Development (G.E.D.) Test are eligible for admission to Monroe County Community College. Other individuals may be admitted in programs and single courses for which they have the proper background, experience and intellectual capacity as determined by the Admissions Office."

Since the college was opened, there have been shifts in student age and college programming. In the sixties and early seventies, the average age of students at Monroe County Community College was nineteen (19) years, and college programs were geared for students planning to transfer to senior institutions. In the late seventies and early eighties the average age of the student body advanced to thirty (30). These students were career or job oriented and our programming shifted toward business and technical education, job upgrading, and/or immediate employment.

Although the college has been concerned about students with academic deficiencies, attempts to address this problem have not been successful. From 1965-69, remedial classes in English and math were offered, but fell by the wayside due to lack of enrollment. On the recommendation of staff, diagnostic tests that were administered for counseling and class placement were discontinued on the premise that older people were reluctant to take tests. Consequently, it was believed that the college was losing potential students. The national grade inflation of the seventies affected our institution. Student grades made it difficult not to question the genuine need for remedial and developmental education; eighty percent (80%) of our students were passing; the majority with A's and B's.

Transfer students were doing well at senior institutions and employers were satisfied with our career graduates. Nevertheless, the question was raised: Should any college credit be given for junior and senior high school level courses? Secondary and intermediate courses were provided through Adult and Continuing Education in the local school districts in non-credit courses and pre-college summer school programs. Other methods which did not tie credit to less than college level work were also investigated.

Cost of implementing a remedial or developmental program was another major concern. The college had been struggling financially for a number of years. As a result, the physical plant was deteriorating rapidly and merely keeping existing programs going was extremely difficult. The college objectives noted in the catalogue were being addressed under severe economic conditions. Furthermore, if differentiation of credit qualifying for financial aid discouraged students from enrolling in remedial or developmental courses, these were not sufficient reasons for awarding college level credit for non-college level work.

When the voters approved a millage increase after fifteen years of operation and thirteen attempts, the District improved and added new programs to meet the needs of the District. At this time, the Dean of Instruction and Division Chairmen in the Instructional Area also recommended a Developmental and Remedial Center for our students. I reluctantly agreed to proceed with the investigation of the developmental concept although, after interviewing candidates for the position, it was obvious that the projected cost factors for the Center were more than had been contemplated in the Instructional proposal; as a result, I directed the Dean to make no commitment for staffing until we reviewed the matter.

Re-evaluation of the developmental center concept was needed, and a total review was required in relationship to the college mission and the cost of the program.

At this point, data was solicited from member institutions of AACJC. I could not find any hard data to assist me in finding solutions for my concerns. Therefore, I designed a questionnaire covering various dimensions of developmental learning at the community college level. The response to my questionnaire from the presidents or their designee was overwhelming. Out of nine hundred and three (903) questionnaires I had a return of six hundred and thirty-nine (639), or a seventy and seventy-six one hundredths percent (70.76%) return.

They covered a variety of institutions and included colleges as far away as Alaska, Hawaii, American Samoa and Puerto Rico. While amazed at the response, I was also impressed by the same concerns that many presidents have regarding Developmental and Remedial Programs. I found out very quickly that I was not alone, but that there is widespread concern.

The respondees were most gracious and some of them sent copies of their statutory responsibilities. Others sent copies of some of their own surveys. References to books, people in the field, and suggested institutional visits were included along with the questionnaire.

Based on my research, there is ambivalence regarding the role of the community college in developmental and remedial education. Although forty-eight percent (48%) of the respondents indicated that regular college credit was given for remedial and developmental courses on their campuses, twenty-one and two-tenths percent (21.2%) indicated that their personal feelings were that college credit should not be given for

developmental and remedial courses! There appears to be an alarming concern that quality of standards is suffering and that the reputation of the community college is in jeopardy.

The community colleges serve a broad constituency and it is reflected in their mission statements in relationship to remedial and basic education offerings.

The mission statement for Connecticut Community Colleges contains a statement regarding remedial and self-development courses:

> "To provide remedial and self-development courses for citizens who lack the basic skills for suitable job placement, and/or who need and desire specialized knowledge and skills to become more effective as individuals and as employees or employers..."

The Texas Education Code provides for:

> "(5) compensatory educations programs designed to fulfill the commitment of an admissions policy allowing the enrollment of disadvantaged students."

In the State of Illinois, in 1977 remediation in higher education was to be carried by the community colleges, and senior college remedial programs were to be phased out within five years. No credit was to be given for remedial courses. As the K-12 programs were upgraded, the community colleges could begin to de-emphasize their role in offering remedial courses.

The State of Oregon has designated Adult Basic Education and G.E.D. preparation programs to the community colleges. Reimbursement is on the same basis as vocational instruction.

The State of Washington, under PL 91-230 and 95-561, defines the adult as "anyone 16 years of age or older"; gives the state community college system the responsibility for providing basic education; and provides each community college with funding for the expressed purpose of providing basic education. State funds are specifically allocated for

providing ABE Level 1 (Grades 1-3) and Level 2 (Grades 4-6). State funds cannot be used for above Levels 1 and 2 unless data supports the fact that each community college has satisfied the basic educational needs of its population.

It is quite apparent that the community college members of AACJC represent as diverse a constituency as one can find anywhere in the world. They serve large urban areas, small rural areas, suburban areas, predominantly black populations, predominantly white populations, predominantly native American and Spanish speaking populations, and a varigated mixture of all of the above.

Dr. I. S. "Bud" Hakanson, President of Umpqua Community College, is quoted in the February 1982 issue of the National Council for Community Relations from a speech he gave in Portland, Oregon in October of 1981. "Most of these colleges offer four major types of programs: vocational, liberal arts, community education/special interest, and more and more developmental and remedial programs." (Emphasis mine.)

My own investigation provided a variety of answers to the question: Should remedial courses being offered on community college campuses be defined as junior and senior level K-12 courses? Some of the more interesting responses are as follows:

> "No real definition - what is remedial for one is not for another - generally they are courses with high school content. English, math, etc., regular college credit is given, but not for an A.A. degree."

> "They are described as refresher courses. Adults returning to campus after being out of high school for several years relate to the term 'refresher' more positively. Regular college credit is given. Typically, however, this credit will not apply to graduation requirements."

"We don't define them as such. They are college level courses but they review some of the basics in math, English and reading that should have been covered in high school. In-house credit - non-transferable to other colleges and not computed into G.P.A. figures."

"Not as such - however, the level is of course the same. Regular college credit is given."

"Below college level courses. Below college courses have below '100' catalog numbers. The credits for these below 100 classes show on transcripts, but do not count in G.P.A. nor toward program completion."

"They are 'pre-college.' No credit is given."

"'Remedial' needs a definition before answering."

"They are not described as such, but the level of instruction would be similar."

"They are really what might best be called post-secondary, college 'prep.' Regular college credit but not for transfer."

"We do not define levels of courses. Regular college credit is given. The issue of whether or not to continue this practice is being considered by the Academic Standards Committee and the Faculty Senate. There is a possibility that credit may be removed from courses below college level."

"They are performance level but not defined as junior or senior high school. The courses are listed as college level course numbers, etc. Credit hour equivalent for tuition purposes; however, the hours do not count toward graduation."

"'Adult Basic Education' Continuing Education units are given. They can be used to carry a full-time student credit load which is 12 credits/quarter for financial aid."

"Remedial courses are not defined with respect to any particular educational skill level. The courses are competency based and are defined by level of skill required for successful completion. Students receive Basic Skills credit or, as it is often called, college credit. The credit counts for full-time status and financial aid purposes, but does not count in credit hours required for an Associate Degree."

> "Some are high school completion or Adult Basic Education and Adult Secondary Education. Some receive regular college credit, some high school. Policy is not consistent as now applied."

There seems to be a real problem of determining the differences between "remedial courses" and "developmental courses." There is not a commonly accepted definition; perhaps semantics plays a major role in obtaining hard data to support offering college credit for non-college level work.

If one accepts the premise that everything offered at the community college should have credit, it shouldn't be bothersome that senior institutions accept Grades 1-4, 5-8, 9-12 work as college level work if they determine to accept our students as transfers. However, if as a consequence community college transfer students do not do well, it reflects poorly on community colleges and should be a concern.

If the trend is toward offering more and more developmental and remedial programs, concerned community college educators run the risk of doing a great disservice to their students if they do not differentiate between acceptable college level standards and less than college level work.

It does not mean that if the local high schools do not offer Adult Basic Education or General Educational Development Test programs the community colleges cannot. However, it does mean that a very clear distinction must be drawn between the levels of work being offered at the community college. There are those who, for whatever reason, are not functioning at the educational level expected when they enroll in college level programs and courses. If remedial work is offered, it should be identified and not be given college level credit.

The role and place of developmental education at the community college is unclear. There seems to be little consensus regarding the content of these courses. It has not been determined if the remedial courses offered are college level or intermediate and secondary level.

The place of developmental or remedial education in the community college curriculum is a critical issue. If the community colleges are post-secondary institutions how can they justify giving college level credit for K-12 work. If they compromise their credit hour system to encourage students to enroll in these courses or for state reimbursement, they may lose their legitimate standing as post-secondary institutions.

This compromise of standards may adversely affect our students. Many of our students see the community college as their only vehicle for intellectual, social and economic mobility. If developmental or remedial education is offered at the community college, it should be clearly identified as pre-college level work and no college level credit should be given. This is in the best interest of all students and the colleges that serve them.

APPENDIX

MONROE COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

1555 S. RAISINVILLE ROAD
MONROE, MICHIGAN 48161
Telephone Area Code 313 242-7300

December 21, 1981

Dear Colleague:

I have been involved in education for over thirty-one years; with community colleges for over twenty-six years, five as an instructor, five as a dean of instruction, and am in my seventeenth year as founding President of Monroe County Community College.

During this period, financing and enrollments have ebbed and flowed. The various societal pressures brought to bear on education by special interest groups have contributed to my education as an administrator.

Today I am being confronted with a new problem, the establishment of a Developmental and Remedial Center on campus. Despite the pressure, I can't get any hard data from the advocates that indicates, in my opinion, the need for such a Center.

In addition, the hue and cry from local and federal legislative bodies regarding funding "higher education" institutions for teaching high school and junior high school subjects as being unjustified is increasing daily.

My questionnaire has been triggered by some of the following concerns:

1. Funding this type of operation.
2. Credit vs. non-credit for less than college-level courses.
3. Should a community college try to "be all things to all people"?
4. Should a community college admit students who have not graduated from high school or completed a G.E.D.T. equivalency diploma?
5. If they should be admitted, what kinds of courses and programs should be provided for them and by whom within the college community?
6. If not, who should provide this service - the local high schools, intermediate school districts, etc.?
7. Is developmental the same as remedial? If not, what is it?

Would you take a minute to answer the enclosed brief questionnaire and return it to me? If you are interested in a tabulation of the results, I will be happy to send you one.

Very truly yours,

Ronald Campbell

Ronald Campbell
President

RC:ce

Enclosures (2)

SURVEY OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE DEVELOPMENTAL AND REMEDIAL CENTER PROGRAMS

Would you please take a few minutes to answer the following questionnaire?

1. Do you offer remedial or developmental courses on your campus?

   ☐ Yes ☐ No

2. Is your institution investigating the possibility of establishing a Developmental and Remedial Center on your campus?

   ☐ Yes ☐ No

3. Are remedial courses on your campus defined as junior high and high school level courses?

   ☐ Yes ☐ No If no, describe.

4. Is any type of credit given for remedial courses? ☐ Yes ☐ No

   If yes, is credit ☐ regular college credit? ☐ continuing education units?

   ☐ high school? ☐ junior high? ☐ Other (describe)

5. Do you have a Developmental and Remedial Skills Center? ☐ Yes ☐ No

   If yes, is the Center sponsored by or offered by one of the following:

   ☐ Student Personnel Services Area? ☐ Instructional Area?

   ☐ Adult & Continuing Education Area? ☐ Other (describe)

6. Does your institution offer Adult Basic Education and General Educational Development Test Programs?

   ☐ Yes ☐ No

   If no, do local high school or intermediate school districts offer these programs?

   ☐ Yes ☐ No

7. Do you feel that remedial courses on your campus should be given

   ☐ regular college credit? ☐ continuing education units?

   ☐ credit toward graduation from your institution, but not transfer credit?

   ☐ no credit of any kind? ☐ Other (describe)

Whom should I contact if I would like to visit your Campus Development Center?

_____ _____ _____

Name Title Phone Number

_____

Institution

Would you like to receive a copy of the survey results? ☐ Yes ☐ No

MONROE COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

1555 S. RAISINVILLE ROAD
MONROE, MICHIGAN 48161
Telephone Area Code 313 242-7300

March 29, 1982

Dear Colleague:

Enclosed is a summary of the responses to the Survey of Community College Developmental and Remedial Center Programs which you so graciously filled out.

Out of the 903 questionnaires sent out, over 70% of the presidents or their designees responded.

Most of the institutions already have centers, and the majority of institutions offer some type of remedial or developmental courses.

Offering credit for remedial or developmental classes appears to be a continuing problem. Even though 48% of the respondees indicated that regular college credit was awarded for remedial and developmental courses, only 21% felt that regular college credit should be given for these kinds of courses.

Overall, from the responses I would have to assume that most community and junior colleges feel it is valid to offer remedial and developmental work.

I received many suggestions regarding literature in the field, colleges to visit, and indications of a great interest in this whole area of instruction.

After I have an opportunity to study and review the comments which I have received, I will attempt to pull the data together and submit it to the AACJC Journal for possible publication.

The opinions are as diverse as the geographic areas which responded. South Dakota was the only state not represented, and returns were received from as far away as Micronesia, Guam and Puerto Rico, as well as Alaska, Hawaii, and Canada.

Very truly yours,

Ron

Ronald Campbell
President

RC:ce

Enclosure

SURVEY RESULTS - COMMUNITY COLLEGE DEVELOPMENTAL AND REMEDIAL PROGRAMS

1. Do you offer remedial or developmental courses on your campus?

   Yes - 625 (97.8%) No - 14 (2.1%)

2. Is your institution investigating the possibility of establishing a Developmental and Remedial Center on your campus?

   Yes - 69 (38.7%) No - 109 (61.2%)

3. Are remedial courses on your campus defined as junior high and high school level courses?

   Yes - 127 (21%) No - 477 (78.9%)

4. Is any type of credit given for remedial courses?

   Yes - 491 (81.2%) No - 113 (18.7%)

   If yes, is credit: Regular college credit? 290 (48%)
   Continuing education units? 35 (5.7%)
   High school? 35 (5.7%)
   Junior high? 3 (.4%)
   Other (describe) 186 (30.7%)
   Did not answer - 55 (9.1%)

5. Do you have a Developmental and Remedial Skills Center?

   Yes - 510 (79.9%) No - 128 (20%)

   If yes, is the Center sponsored by or offered by one of the following

   Student Personnel Services Area? 69 (10.8%)
   Adult & Continuing Education Area? 49 (7%)
   Instructional Area? 386 (60%)
   Other (describe) 33 (5.1%)
   Did not answer - 101 (16.6%)

6. Does your institution offer Adult Basic Education and General Educational Development Test Programs?

   Yes - 406 (63.5%) No - 240 (37.5%)

   If no, do local high school or intermediate school districts offer these programs?

   Yes - 246 (38.4%) No - 22 (3.4%) Did not answer - 371 (58%)

7. Do you feel that remedial courses on your campus should be given

   regular college credit? 146 (21.2%)
   continuing education units? 53 (7.7%)
   credit toward graduation from your institution, but not transfer credit? 259 (37.7%)
   no credit of any kind? 107 (15.5%)
   Other (describe) 122 (17.7%)

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